

Carlton Academy

Coningswath Road, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 3SH

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership, together with robust governance, has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour and safety over time and each of these aspects are now good.
- A positive atmosphere supports the smooth day-to-day running of the academy.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The very large majority of students leaving the sixth form go on to their chosen university, employment or further education and training provider.
- The academy has improved admirably since its conversion. Senior leaders have built good capacity for improvement throughout the academy and are reaping the benefits of having capable staff at all levels of the organisation.
- The partnership with the Redhill Academy is proving highly effective in supporting school improvement.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium make particularly good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sixth form requires improvement. While there are some 'high-flying' students, most students make no better than average progress and so their achievement requires improvement.
- Some aspects of the academy's work require attention if it is to improve further, particularly in aspects of teaching and the effectiveness of strategies to maximise students' achievement and improve rates of attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons taught by 33 different members of staff in 14 different subjects at the academy. The lead inspector conducted six joint observations with the school’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited an assembly and several tutorial sessions, and saw the academy’s specialist provision for improving students’ literacy skills and its Student Support Centre, which provides support for students that are internally excluded. Inspectors also explored different areas of the academy site during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings or discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the head of school, the executive principal and a number of senior and middle leaders such as heads of department, the director of post-16 education and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to three different groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), along with an analysis of the school’s own parental and student questionnaires. Inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from 66 academy staff.
- The inspection team examined a range of academy documentation including: documents about safeguarding and child protection arrangements; development policies and self-evaluation plans; lesson and departmental plans; records of lesson monitoring and checks on students’ work; and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the academy’s arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and students known to be eligible for free school meals.

Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Alan Brewerton

Additional Inspector

Thelma McIntosh-Clark

Additional Inspector

Michael Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Carlton Academy is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. The school converted to become an academy on 1 September 2011. It is sponsored by the Redhill Academy Trust and has an executive principal who has oversight of the two academies which make up the trust. Carlton Academy also has a head of school who is in charge on a day-to-day basis.
- The very large majority of students are White British and live locally. The remaining small numbers of students are from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of students who are believed to speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is higher than in most schools nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational need is lower than average. Their needs range from physical disability to autistic spectrum disorder and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- A small number of Year 10 and Year 11 students attend a range of work-related courses at local providers including, BTE, Thorneywood Base, Beckhampton, Wheelbase and 1st class Tailored Solutions. These are externally accredited courses such as hair and beauty and construction. These students typically access these courses once or twice a week and are taught in the main school for the rest of the time.
- The academy provides extended services such as study support and community access to its facilities. The academy has also recently started to work collaboratively with its partner the Redhill Academy to improve the range of courses available to sixth-form students.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the effectiveness of teaching on students' learning so that it is consistently outstanding for all groups of students in the academy by:
 - ensuring teachers always plan lessons that stretch and support all students, including the least, most able and more vulnerable groups of students, so that they develop higher level, knowledge, skills and understanding in every subject they study rapidly
 - eliminating the less effective teaching and establishing the most effective teaching and learning strategies in the academy as the norm in every classroom, particularly in the sixth form
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback by evaluating students' learning more precisely and consistently, always correcting any errors in their thinking and ensuring they know exactly what they must do to meet and exceed their targets.
- Ensure all groups of students' achievement is outstanding by:
 - further raising students' attainment in those subjects where standards are not high when compared with national expectations and averages, including mathematics, English, science and history
 - ensuring all teachers set clear and ambitious targets for all students and make best use of the data the academy collects so they can more effectively support, challenge and improve all students' progress, especially those that are not yet making consistently good or outstanding progress, such as the most able students.

- As a matter of urgency, improve students' rates of attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence by:
 - more effectively raising the profile, importance and expectation of excellent attendance among all students and staff
 - introducing more rigorous and effective procedures and strategies to raise attendance, especially among those students who are persistently absent
 - working with parents and carers to make sure they understand the negative impact poor attendance can have on their children's education.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well. This was illustrated by the improvement in the numbers of students making and exceeding expected levels of progress and the fact that their attainment is improving at a faster rate than nationally over a sustained period. However, the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is more variable.
- The progress of students studying work-related courses such as engineering, hair and beauty and motor vehicle maintenance, part-time, is closely monitored and they achieve well, including suitable BTEC qualifications.
- A small number of students are entered early for mathematics. Historically this has not always delivered the high outcomes anticipated. As a result, the academy is rethinking its strategy.
- Students read effectively and regularly. The work the academy does to improve the literacy skills of less-able students is particularly effective.
- Students' achievement is not outstanding because there remain variations in the performance of some groups of students and subjects. For example, the achievements of the most able students in the academy are not consistently good. In contrast, the achievement of boys and students who are eligible for pupil premium funding is outstanding. The academy's leaders accept that they must further improve the effectiveness of their strategies to raise attainment so that all students make exceptional progress in all subjects and attain the highest grades, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and high entry subjects like humanities. Leaders also know that more work needs to be done to ensure all staff set clear and challenging targets in order to better support their rapid development.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement to be good when set against their starting points. Students' attainment is rising but it remains broadly in line rather than above national averages in most of the subjects they study. Much work goes into ensuring underperforming students 'get back on track'. Leaders accept that the same attention needs to be consistently paid to the most able students so that they go on to attain the highest grades possible.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching in the academy is good or better, which is reflected in the good progress that most students make. Staff are knowledgeable and have responded positively to the coaching, mentoring and professional challenge they have received to improve the quality and consistency of their teaching. Typically, lessons are well planned and focus on students acquiring, developing and reinforcing key concepts, knowledge and skills in the subjects they are taught. In the most effective lessons imaginative delivery, very high expectations, excellent learning resources, clear success criteria and targeted questioning, together with appropriate guidance and support to correct students' misconceptions allowed to them make very rapid progress.
- Students responded well to the interesting, demanding and organised approach most staff adopt and students like having to take responsibility for leading and evaluating their own learning. They particularly enjoyed problem-solving activities and more practically oriented tasks.
- The support for students eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled students, students with low literacy levels and those with special educational needs is effective and has helped them to make faster progress in their learning and reach higher standards than they have done previously.

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because inconsistencies exist and the difference between the most and least effective teaching is sizeable. There are some really excellent teachers at the academy, capable of getting the very best out of students. The challenge for leaders and all staff is to make this the norm in each and every classroom.
- Inconsistency in marking and feedback and lessons which do not meet the specific needs of the range of students that the academy has, including 'high flyers', average-attaining and less able students, is curbing their learning. The challenge for staff is to ensure all students make excellent progress and know precisely what they must do to reach and exceed their targets.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement to be good, reflected in students' average rather than good achievement. Good teaching was seen during the inspection but this was counter-balanced by lessons in which students did not make good progress. The subjects and courses available to sixth formers meets their needs, which is reflected in the improving retention and completion rates for courses, and students' success in moving onto higher and further education, employment or training. Students are involved in mentoring younger students, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and sporting, musical and charity events.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The academy presents itself as a harmonious environment with a positive and caring ethos. The large majority of students, including the different groups of minority ethnic students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs relate well to each other and staff. Incidents of disorder are rare and students say that bullying and harassment, such as racist, homophobic or cyber-bullying, is uncommon. Students have very positive attitudes to learning. They are good-mannered and conduct themselves well both in the classroom and at social times.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy and that any problems are quickly resolved. They understand safe working practices and usually apply them. Some first-class support is available, which helps students to feel secure, particularly those deemed more vulnerable. Of the parents and carers and staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires, the large majority agree that behaviour is good and well managed. All agree that students are safe at the academy.
- Effective advice and guidance systems, including the in-house Student Support Centre and the links the academy have developed with a range of outside agencies help to ensure that specialist help is given to students with particular behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. As a result the levels of permanent and fixed-term exclusions have declined significantly.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because they are not yet consistently first-class or exemplary throughout the academy. For example, students' attendance is below average, while rates of persistent absence are high. The current systems are insufficiently rigorous and improving attendance does not have a sufficiently high profile. The academy recognise that in order to significantly improve the situation they must enlist the support of parents and carers by making clear to them the negative impact poor attendance can have on their children's education.
- Behaviour and safety are also good in the sixth form. Students are considerate, responsible and mature. Good systems exist to support them. Sixth form attendance also requires improvement.

The leadership and management are good

- The implementation of effective strategic actions has resulted in big improvements in key aspects of the academy's work, particularly the leadership of teaching and learning and the resultant gains in students' achievements. The shrewd executive principal and the head of school are well supported by a talented team of senior and middle leaders who collectively embody the vision for the school to become an outstanding provider of education. They lead by example, have high expectations and hold staff robustly to account for the quality of their work.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and all aspects of the academy's work are regularly monitored and evaluated to identify changes needed. Staff's success in moving the academy's effectiveness from satisfactory to good in a relatively short period of time is testament to their proficiency.
- The academy's partnership with Redhill Academy, which has been judged outstanding on two successive occasions by Ofsted, is proving fruitful in accelerating the improvement process at Carlton Academy. They are sharing their tried and tested strategies with good effect.
- Staff are proud to work at the academy and understand its vision for the future. Parents largely support the academy and all of them said they would recommend it to others. But, a minority felt that they did not receive valuable information from the academy about their child's progress and that the school did not always respond positively to concerns they raised.
- Leaders have a rigorous performance management process. There is evidence that they reward the most effective staff and hold to account those who are underperforming. On occasion, this has included preventing staff from progressing up the pay spine and/or disciplinary action.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and well matched to the needs, interests and aspirations of students. Alongside traditionally academic and work-related courses, students benefit from a range of after-school activities and events and a series of visits and visitors to widen their horizons. For example, some students visited Cambridge University, while others visited a Sikh temple and a mosque. Students also volunteer and raise funds for charity. Activities like these help to effectively promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to promote the targeted students', academic, social and emotional development. As a result, the gap between their academic standards and those of other students in the academy has narrowed and their behaviour has improved.
- Provision for the small numbers of students who access off-site alternative provision is effective and enables them to gain a range of externally accredited qualifications such as BTECs.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and the procedures for safe recruitment of staff, child protection, risk assessment and site security are robust. Designated staff are well trained.
- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement to be good but is having an increasingly effective impact in raising students' attainment, strengthening the curriculum and improving the quality of teaching. These developments have not been in place long enough to have had a huge impact yet but the green shoots are evident. A more rigorous approach to monitoring and modifying all aspects of the sixth form's work underpin the fledgling improvements evident.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body discharges its duty to monitor, support and challenge and strategically influence the academy's development effectively. A suitable committee structure linked to key

aspects of the academy's work together with the range of relevant experience and expertise members allows them to critically evaluate the academy's performance.

- The minutes of governor meetings show that they ask searching questions of the academy's leaders concerning key themes such as teaching, students' progress and safeguarding matters. Training and new appointments have strengthened governors' capacity to execute their duties well. They regularly visit the academy and also call senior and middle leaders to meetings to account for the effectiveness of their work. This has given them a better understanding of what happens in the academy. For example they can discuss the impact of pupil premium funding and the links between performance management and staff salary progression or promotion.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137085
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	399843

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	663
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Mathers
Headteacher	Martin Brook
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	0115 955 0010
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Email address	m.brook@theacademycarlton.org.uk

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